

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0990

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, IS, JO, XF  
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESS--NABLUS MAYOR'S  
VIEWS

REF: JERUSALEM 912

SUMMARY: AFTER A SUCCESSFUL FOUR-MONTH TOUR IN THE ARAB WORLD, NABLUS MAYOR BASSAM SHAKA' HAS FOUND NO REASON TO ALTER HIS SUPPORT FOR THE PLO AND ITS DEMANDS FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND AN INDEPENDENT STATE. INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED BY WEST BANK PALESTINIANS IN DEFIANCE OF THE PLO, SHAKA' SAID, BUT--HE HINTED--THEY MIGHT BE IMPOSED BY OUTSIDE POWERS. SHAKA' ALSO BELIEVES SADAT INITIATIVE WAS WRONGHEADED AND IS NOW DEAD, U.S. POLICY LACKS BALANCE AND ENCOURAGES ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE, AND LOCAL RELATIONS WITH ISRAELIS ARE TERRIBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. NABLUS MAYOR BASSAM SHAKA', WHO RETURNED LAST WEEK  
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FROM A FOUR-MONTH FUNDRAISING TOUR IN THE ARAB WORLD, LUNCED APRIL 4 IN JERUSALEM WITH CONSUL GENERAL AND OTHER CONGEN OFFICERS. (FOR DETAILS OF TRIP SEE REFTEL.) AS USUAL, SHAKA'S CALM, MODERATE MANNER CONTRASTED IRONICALLY WITH HARDLINE, PRO-PLO VIEWS. HE SEEMED PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF HIS TRIP AND, AS USUAL, IMPRESSED US WITH HIS QUIET SELF-ASSURANCE AND CONFIDENCE

IN THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

2. AN INTERIM PERIOD. AFTER REITERATING STANDARD PLO DEMANDS FOR COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE, SHAKA' CRITICIZED PROPOSALS HE HAD "READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS" FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD LEADING TO A LIMITED ACT OF SELF DETERMINATION BY THE PALESTINIANS, I.E. A CHOICE BETWEEN ISRAEL OR JORDAN. SUCH A SOLUTION WOULD BE EPHEMERAL, SHAKA' STRESSED, BECAUSE IT DID NOT REALIZE THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS. CONGEN SUGGESTED THE "IDEAL WAS OFTEN THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD" AND THE CURRENT WINDOW IN TIME FOR PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING THEIR FUTURE MIGHT CLOSE AS HAD BEEN THE CASE IN 1948 AND 1967.

3. SHAKA' ARGUED THAT NO WEST BANK PALESTINIAN, BE HE ANWAR NUSEIBEH, ANWAR AL KHATIB, OR BASSAM SHAKA', COULD CREDIBLY REPRESENT THE PALESTINIANS SINCE THOSE UNDER OCCUPATION WERE ONLY A FRACTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. ANYONE WHO TRIED, SHAKA' SAID, WOULD SOON LOSE POPULAR SUPPORT. THE PLO, WHOM SHAKA' BELIEVED FOUGHT CREDIBLY IN LEBANON, CONTINUED TO BE THEIR SOLE, LEGITIMATE SPOKESMAN.

4. NEVERTHELESS, SHAKA' ADMITTED THAT OUTSIDE POWERS  
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MIGHT IMPOSE SOME INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS IN THEIR OWN AND THE WORLD'S INTEREST AND, HE HINTED, LOCAL PALESTINIANS WOULD BE FORCED TO ACCOMMODATE THEMSELVES TO A NEW SITUATION. HE SHOWED NO INTEREST, HOWEVER, IN A WEST BANK VOICE IN DETERMINING WHAT THOSE ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT BE. SIGNIFICANTLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME HE APPEARED TO ACCEPT THE IDEA OF A THIRD PARTY SUCH AS UN ADMINISTERING THE WEST BANK FOR A LIMITED PERIOD.

5. SADAT'S INITIATIVE. ADMITTING THAT SOME FAINT-HEARTS MAY HAVE INITIALLY SUPPORTED SADAT OUT OF DESPAIR OR MISPLACED FAITH, SHAKA' ARGUED THAT HIS PRESENT WEST BANK SUPPORT WAS NIL. HE SAID HE ALSO FOUND LITTLE SUPPORT FOR SADAT ON THE OUTSIDE. HIS MAJOR CRITICISM WAS THAT SADAT'S UNILATERAL INITIATIVE HAD STRENGTHENED THE ISRAELI POSITION BY SHATTERING ARAB UNITY. HE DID ADMIT THAT SADAT HAD SWAYED U.S. OPINION AND PROMPTED MODERATES TO DISSENT INSIDE ISRAEL, BUT--LOOKING AT THE BOTTOM LINE--HE SAW NO REAL GAINS FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

6. U.S. POLICY. SHAKA' CHARGED THAT THE U.S. HAD,

IN EFFECT, PERMITTED THE ISRAELI ATTACK IN SOUTH LEBANON THROUGH ITS CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. IN NEGOTIATIONS, AMERICAN PRESSURE WAS MISDIRECTED AT THE PALESTINIANS AND SHOULD BE PLACED ON ISRAEL, SHAKA' SAID.

7. RELATIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS. ACCORDING TO SHAKA', THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES AT DAMIA BRIDGE WELCOMED HIM BACK BY DETAINING HIM FOR SIX HOURS AND SUBJECTING HIM TO HUMILIATING SEARCHES. "BUT AFTER ALL, WE ARE ENEMIES." HE NOTED. SINCE HIS RETURN, HE HAS NOT HEARD FROM THE MILGOV. NOR DID ISRAELI CHIEF OF STAFF GUR CALL ON THE MAYOR APRIL 3 DURING HIS VISIT TO NABLUS. SHAKA' COMPLAINED ABOUT ISRAELI EXCESSES IN STIFLING CONFIDENTIAL

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RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS, THE MILGOV'S CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO EXPANSION OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRICAL PLANT (WHICH HE WILL NEVERTHELESS PURSUE) AND ISRAELI DRILLING FOR WATER NEAR NABLUS' WATER SOURCE.

8. COMMENT: AS FAR AS THE POPULARLY-ELECTED MAYOR OF THE WEST BANK'S LARGEST CITY IS CONCERNED, PARTICIPATION BY WEST BANK PALESTINIANS IN DETERMINING THEIR FUTURE THROUGH PARTICIPATIONS IN NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS STATE IS NO GO. ONLY FAR REACHING ISRAELI CONCESSIONS OR A PLO GREEN LIGHT CAN CHANGE THAT. ACCOMMODATION TO AN IMPOSED INTERIM SOLUTION IS MORE LIKELY.  
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## Message Attributes

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